United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General continues visit to Japan, attending dinner hosted by Prime Minister, and meeting earlier with Chairman of Social Democratic Party and Ministers of Foreign Affairs, State and Health and Welfare, amongst others.

+ General Assembly urges Security Council to consider exempting Bosnia and Herzegovina from arms embargo against former Yugoslavia, to allow that country to exercise right of self-defence; meanwhile, leaders of parties in Bosnian conflict are to meet in Geneva tomorrow in first direct session in two weeks; on Sunday, UNPROFOR soldier was shot in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 67th killed in former Yugoslavia.

+ Eighth Convention between European Community and UNRWA, for assistance to Palestine refugees for 1993-1995, signed in Brussels last Friday, providing for $106 million in cash assistance to Agency's education, health and food assistance programmes.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today continued his visit to Japan, concluding a day of high-level meetings with an informal working dinner hosted by Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa. Earlier today, accompanied by Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), he met with Foreign Minister Tautomu Hata. According to a United Nations spokesman, the two main topics discussed were cooperation between Japan and the United Nations, and the Secretary-General's trip to the Republic of Korea and to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Next, Mr. Boutros-Ghali met with the Chairman of the Sccial Democratic Party of Japan, after which the he attended a luncheon at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan. He then met with the Japanese Minister of State and Chairman of the Clean Government Party, and later with the Minister of Health and Welfare and Chairman of the Democratic Socialist Party, with whom he discussed Japanese support for the United Nations, including peace-keeping operations in Mozambique and Cambodia, as well as financial support for the Organization.

(more)

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Yesterday, the first full day of his visit to Japan, Mr. Boutros-Ghali met with Takehito Nakata, the father of United Nations volunteer Atsuhito Nakata who was killed in Cambodia. The Secretary-General then held a series of meetings with the Vice-Chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party; the Vice-President of the Japan Red Cross; the Chairman of the Boutros Boutros-Ghali Scholarship Fund; the Chairman of the Japan Science Council, and the President and Vice-Presidents of Soka Gakkai International.

Tomorrow, Mr. and Mrs. Boutros-Ghali are scheduled to have an audience with the Emperor and Empress of Japan. On Wednesday, the Secretary-General leaves for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where he will spend two days before proceding to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

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The General Assembly this morning urged the Security Council to give urgent consideration to exempting Bosnia and Herzegovina from its arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia. The Assembly urged the international community to cooperate with that country in exercising its inherent right of self-defence. By a vote of 109 in favour to none against, with 57 abstentions, the Assembly adopted a resolution which also asked the Council to ensure that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) immediately cease to supply military arms, equipment and services to Bosnian Serb paramilitary units.

The Council was asked to act immediately to close all detention camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to close all concentration camps established by the Serbs in Serbia and Montenegro and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Assembly demanded that the Bosnian Serb party lift the siege of Sarajevo and other "safe areas", as well as of other besieged Bosnian towns. It also demanded that all concerned facilitate the unhindered flow of humanitarian assistance, including water, electricity, fuel and communication.

By other terms of the text, the Assembly would call upon the Security Council to ensure that the proposals contained in the "Geneva peace package" are in conformity with the United Nations Charter, international law, previously adopted resolutions of the Assembly and the Council, and the principles adopted at the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. It would call for the urgent reconvening of that Conference in order to arrive at just and equitable proposals for lasting peace and would call upon the parties to the conflict to show good faith in their negotiations.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the warring parties in the Bosnian conflict are to meet in Geneva tomorrow. International mediators Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord David Owen have been in constant communication with all involved, but tomorrow's meeting will be the first direct session in two weeks. A spokesman for the Co-Chairmen said Lord Owen and Mr. Stoltenberg would do their utmost to get a settlement before Christmas, adding that the feeling and the hope was that "the time could be right".

(more)

From Bosnia and Herzegovina it is reported that another soldier serving with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) has been killed, bringing to 67 the total number who have died while serving in the former Yugoslavia. Corporal Marc Gilbert Orban, a member of the Belgian battalion, was on convoy duty on Sunday afternoon when he was shot by a sniper near Visoko. He was taken to UNPROFOR's infirmary at its headquarters in Kiseljak where he died an hour later.

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The eighth Convention between the European Community and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), for assistance to Palestine refugees for 1993-1995, was signed in Brussels on 17 December. It provides for approximately $106 million in cash assistance to the Agency's education, health and food assistance programmes, an increase of 16 per cent over the previous three-year Convention. The European Community and its member States provide about 43 per cent of UNRWA's budget.

The European Community has also undertaken to contribute a substantial amount of in-kind assistance, as in previous years. The exact amount of such assistance would be established on an annual basis. During 1993, the Community's in-kind contribution was approximately $35 million. Following the signing of the Declaration of Principles by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel on 13 September in Washington, D.C., the European Community pledged approximately $2 million to rehabilitate refugee shelters in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, as well as $195,000 for the implementation of a food storage programme in the West Bank.

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